



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Darren Rogers
Senior Director, Communications & Media Services
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(502) 636-4461 (office)
(502) 345-1030 (mobile)
Darren.Rogers@KyDerby.com

INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE GROWS FOR AMERICA'S GREATEST RACE; CHURCHILL DOWNS RELEASES SCHEDULE FOR 2018 'ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY'

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, Aug. 31, 2017) – Churchill Downs is eager to stimulate added international interest in next year's \$2 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Grade I) through the creation of a path to gain a berth in America's greatest race for horses based in Europe and the expansion of its current series for Japan's top dirt horses.

Those initiatives and other adjustments to the **"Road to the Kentucky Derby"** were announced Thursday. The changes include the addition of a lucrative Midwest juvenile "Prep Season" race and point adjustments to a pair of races within the "Championship Series."

Churchill Downs Racetrack has used a sliding scale of points awarded to the Top 4 finishers in choice races to determine preference for its 20-horse Kentucky Derby field since 2013. The 1 ¼-mile classic for 3-year-old Thoroughbreds will be run at the historic Louisville, Ky. racetrack for the 144th consecutive year on Saturday, May 5, 2018.

A year ago, Churchill Downs introduced the **"Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby"** to provide a potential entry in the Kentucky Derby for a horse based in Japan. This year, a path is being extended to European horsemen as well.

Much like the "Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby," the new **"European Road to the Kentucky Derby"** is a stand-alone series of seven races that is separate from America's 36-race "Road to the Kentucky Derby" sequence. Only one position in the Kentucky Derby starting gate will be awarded to the horse that accrues the most points in the "European Road to the Kentucky Derby" and accepts an invitation to compete.

"With premier races for Europe's top horses often staged on turf in the months of May through October, we felt it was important to work with our European partners to create a distinctive path for horsemen who are interested in the Kentucky Derby," said **Bill Mudd**, President and Chief Operating Officer for Churchill Downs Incorporated. "Any European horse that intends to test the Kentucky Derby now has an opportunity to qualify for the 1 ¼-mile dirt classic by competing in the new series, which culminates with a trio of early-in-the-year races over synthetic surfaces at Kempton Park, Dundalk and Newcastle. By working with great partners at the racecourses along with the **British Horseracing Authority**, **France Galop** and **Horse Racing Ireland** governing bodies, we're optimistic this new series can add to the worldwide popularity of the Kentucky Derby."

The "European Road to the Kentucky Derby" includes a top-level quartet of one-mile juvenile turf races that will award points to the Top 4 finishing positions: 10 points to the winner, four points to the runner-up, two points to the third-place horse and one-point to the fourth-place finisher. The 2-year-old races are the Sept. 24 Juddmonte Beresford (Group 2) at **Naas Racecourse** in Ireland; the Sept. 30 Juddmonte Royal Lodge (G2) at England's **Newmarket Racecourse**; the Oct. 1 Qatar Prix Jean-Luc Lagardère (G1) on the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe undercard at France's **Chantilly Racecourse**; and the Oct. 28 Racing Post Trophy (G1) at England's **Doncaster Racecourse**.

Two one-mile races for 3-year-olds in early March over synthetic "all weather" racing surfaces – the Road to the Kentucky Derby Condition Stakes at England's **Kempton Park Racecourse** on March 1 and the Patton Stakes (Listed) at Ireland's **Dundalk Stadium** on March 2 – will be awarded points on a scale of 20-8-4-2.

The series will climax March 30 with the one-mile Burradon Stakes at England's **Newcastle Racecourse**, in which points will increase to 30-12-6-3 for the Top 4 finishers.

"Early racing success is compensated in our series but we prefer to emphasize recent form for qualification to the Kentucky Derby, and the creation of this new path provides just that," said **Mike Ziegler**, executive director of racing for Churchill Downs Incorporated.

-more-

Meanwhile, the **Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun**, a **National Association of Racing (NAR)** race that often decides Japan's champion 2-year-old dirt horse, has been added to the "Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby" to make it a three-race series.

The one-mile Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun, which is annually contested at **Kawasaki Racecourse**, is set for Dec. 13 between the **Cattlea Sho** for 2-year-olds on Nov. 25 and the **Hyacinth** for 3-year-olds in mid-February. Both the Cattlea Sho and Hyacinth are one-mile **Japan Racing Association (JRA)** races that are staged at **Tokyo Racecourse**.

Points awarded to the Top 4 finishing positions in the Cattlea Sho and Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun will be 10-4-2-1, respectively, while the Hyacinth will carry a point value of 30-12-6-3.

"It is with great pleasure to receive the news that our featured 2-year-old race, the Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun, will be included in the 'Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby,' a series of races which provides an entry to the Kentucky Derby for a horse from Japan," said **Masanobu Nakajima**, President of **Kanagawa Prefecture Kawasaki Racing Association**. "The Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun is a domestic exchange race in which both JRA and NAR horses can run and it is a race to decide the champion 2-year-old dirt horse in Japan. I am sure that with the inclusion of our race in this series, it opens the door for horses on the NAR circuit not only to the Kentucky Derby but also to the world. It is my earnest wish for this race to be a high-profile race and for our racing association to further promote NAR racing."

"Churchill Downs is thrilled to build upon our partnership with the JRA and welcome the NAR into this appealing series," Ziegler said. "Japan is a burgeoning market with considerable international interest, and we're keen to provide a useful and meaningful path to the Kentucky Derby for their world-class competitors and horsemen."

Two invitations to compete in the Kentucky Derby – one from Japan and one from Europe – will be extended to a horse from their respective series with preference given to the horses that accrue the most points in their sequence. No invitation will be extended beyond the Top 4 point earners but if a horse also qualifies through America's 36-race "Road to the Kentucky Derby" series, the invite will be extended to the next eligible horse. If two or more horses have the same number of points, the tiebreakers are earnings in non-restricted stakes races followed by lifetime earnings. Should an invitation be declined by the Top 4 in either division, the next horse on America's "Road to the Kentucky Derby" preference list can assume the position in the starting gate.

Since 1967, there have been 36 horses who previously raced outside North America and ran in the Kentucky Derby. Venezuela's **Canonero II** won the 1971 Derby, while **Bold Arrangement (GB)**, who was campaigned in Great Britain and France, finished second to **Ferdinand** in the 1986 renewal.

As has been the case for the past four years, the Road to the Kentucky Derby "Prep Season" will commence at the home of the Kentucky Derby on Saturday, Sept. 16 with Churchill Downs' \$150,000 Iroquois (GIII) at 1 1/16 miles. Points awarded during the "Prep Season" are worth 10-4-2-1, respectively, except for the Breeders' Cup Juvenile, which is worth twice as much (20-8-4-2).

A new race during the "Prep Season" is the **\$400,000 Springboard Mile**, which will be run for 2-year-olds on Dec. 17 at Oklahoma City's Remington Park.

"We're delighted to welcome the Springboard Mile into the fold," Ziegler said. "It has been a meaningful race for Midwest 2-year-olds in recent years, including **Will Take Charge**, the eventual 3-year-old champion of 2013. Remington Park officials have been enthusiastic to have their race included in our series, and their commitment was reaffirmed when they increased the purse by \$100,000 to give it shared status as the richest race of Remington Park's season."

The 16 significant events that comprise the "Kentucky Derby Championship Series" during the 10-week run-up to the first Saturday in May remain unchanged from a year ago but the modification of points were made to a pair of races. The **Spiral** (previously 50-20-10-5) and **Lexington** (previously 10-4-2-1) are now worth 20-8-4-2.

"We want to properly reward the winners of both races but simultaneously confirm that the victors have had past or future successes to ensure a spot in the Derby field," Ziegler said.

This is the sixth consecutive year that Churchill Downs will utilize a point system to determine entrants for its famed Kentucky Derby. At least 20 horses have entered the "Run for the Roses" every year since 2004, and 17 of the last 19 years.

A similar series remains in place to qualify for the Kentucky Derby's sister race, the \$1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/8 miles on Friday, May 4, 2018. **Tampa Bay Downs' Suncoast** at one mile and 40 yards in mid-February has been added as a "Prep Season" race to make the **"Road to the Kentucky Oaks"** a 31-race series. Also, Top 4 points to the **Bourbonette** were modified to 20-8-4-2 (previously 50-20-10-5).

2017-18 ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY SCHEDULE

36 Races

Kentucky Derby Prep Season (20 races)

Date	Race	Racetrack	Distance	1 st (Points)	2 nd (Points)	3 rd (Points)	4 th (Points)
Sept. 16	Iroquois	Churchill Downs	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Sept. 30	FrontRunner	Santa Anita	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Oct. 7	Champagne	Belmont Park	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Oct. 7	Breeders' Futurity	Keeneland	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Nov. 4	Breeders' Cup Juvenile	Del Mar	1 1/16 Miles	(20)	(8)	(4)	(2)
Nov. 18	Delta Downs Jackpot	Delta Downs	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Nov. 25	Remsen	Aqueduct	1 1/8 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Nov. 25	Kentucky Jockey Club	Churchill Downs	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Dec. 9	Los Alamitos Futurity	Los Alamitos	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Dec. 17	+Springboard Mile	Remington Park	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Jan. 1	Jerome	Aqueduct	1 Mile 70 Yards	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Jan. 13	Sham	Santa Anita	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Jan. 15	Smarty Jones	Oaklawn Park	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Jan. 20	Lecomte	Fair Grounds	1 Mile 70 Yards	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 3	Robert B. Lewis	Santa Anita	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 3	Withers	Aqueduct	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 3	Holy Bull	Gulfstream Park	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 10	Sam F. Davis	Tampa Bay Downs	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 17	El Camino Real Derby	Golden Gate	1 1/8 Miles (S)	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Feb. 19	Southwest	Oaklawn Park	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)

Kentucky Derby Championship Series (16 races)

Date	Race	Racetrack	Distance	1 st (Points)	2 nd (Points)	3 rd (Points)	4 th (Points)
*Feb. 24	Risen Star	Fair Grounds	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 3	Gotham	Aqueduct	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 3	Fountain of Youth	Gulfstream Park	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 10	San Felipe	Santa Anita	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 10	Tampa Bay Derby	Tampa Bay Downs	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
March 17	Rebel	Oaklawn Park	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
March 17	Spiral	Turfway Park	1 1/8 Miles (S)	(20)	(8)	(4)	(2)
*March 24	UAE Derby	Meydan Racecourse	1 3/16 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*March 24	Louisiana Derby	Fair Grounds	1 1/8 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
March 25	Sunland Derby	Sunland Park	1 1/8 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 31	Florida Derby	Gulfstream Park	1 1/8 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 7	Wood Memorial	Aqueduct	1 1/8 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 7	Blue Grass	Keeneland	1 1/8 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 7	Santa Anita Derby	Santa Anita	1 1/8 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
April 14	Arkansas Derby	Oaklawn Park	1 1/8 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 14	Lexington	Keeneland	1 1/16 Miles	(20)	(8)	(4)	(2)

2017-18 JAPAN ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY SCHEDULE

3 Races

Date	Race	Racetrack	Distance	1 st (Points)	2 nd (Points)	3 rd (Points)	4 th (Points)
Nov. 25	Cattleya Sho	Tokyo Racecourse	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Dec. 13	+Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun	Kawasaki Racecourse	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Mid-Feb.	Hyacinth	Tokyo Racecourse	1 Mile	(30)	(12)	(6)	(3)

2017-18 EUROPEAN ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY SCHEDULE

7 Races

Date	Race	Racetrack	Distance	1 st (Points)	2 nd (Points)	3 rd (Points)	4 th (Points)
Sept. 24	+Juddmonte Beresford	Naas (Ire)	1 Mile (I)	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Sept. 24	+Juddmonte Royal Lodge	Newmarket (GB)	1 Mile (I)	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Oct. 1	+Qatar Prix Jean-Luc Lagardère	Chantilly (Fr)	1 Mile (I)	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Oct. 28	+Racing Post Trophy	Doncaster (GB)	1 Mile (I)	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
March 1	+Road to the Kentucky Derby Condition Stakes	Kempton Park (GB)	1 Mile (S)	(20)	(8)	(4)	(2)
March 2	+Patton (Listed)	Dundalk (Ire)	1 Mile (S)	(20)	(8)	(4)	(2)
March 30	+Burradon	Newcastle (GB)	1 Mile (S)	(30)	(12)	(6)	(3)

2017-18 ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY OAKS SCHEDULE

31 Races

Kentucky Oaks Prep Season (16 races)

Date	Race	Racetrack	Distance	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Sept. 16	Pocahontas	Churchill Downs	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Sept. 30	Chandelier	Santa Anita	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Oct. 6	Alcibiades	Keeneland	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Oct. 8	Frizette	Belmont Park	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Nov. 4	BC Juvenile Fillies	Del Mar	1 1/16 Miles	(20)	(8)	(4)	(2)
Nov. 18	Delta Downs Princess	Delta Downs	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Nov. 25	Demoiselle	Aqueduct	1 1/8 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Nov. 25	Golden Rod	Churchill Downs	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Dec. 9	Starlet	Los Alamitos	1 1/16 Miles	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Jan. 7	Santa Ynez	Santa Anita	7 Furlongs	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Jan. 14	Busanda	Aqueduct	1 Mile 70 Yards	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Jan. 20	Silverbulletday	Fair Grounds	1 Mile 70 Yards	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 3	Forward Gal	Gulfstream Park	7 Furlongs	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 4	Las Virgenes	Santa Anita	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
*Feb. 10	+Suncoast	Tampa Bay Downs	1 Mile 40 Yards	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Feb. 10	Martha Washington	Oaklawn Park	1 Mile	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)

Kentucky Oaks Championship Series (15 races)

Date	Race	Racetrack	Distance	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
*Feb 22	UAE Oaks	Meydan Racecourse	1 3/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*Feb. 24	Busher	Aqueduct	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*Feb. 24	Rachel Alexandra	Fair Grounds	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 3	Davona Dale	Gulfstream Park	1 Mile	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 3	Santa Ysabel	Santa Anita	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
March 10	Honeybee	Oaklawn Park	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
March 17	Bourbonette Oaks	Turfway Park	1 Mile (S)	(20)	(8)	(4)	(2)
*March 24	Fair Grounds Oaks	Fair Grounds	1 1/16 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
March 25	Sunland Park Oaks	Sunland Park	1 1/16 Miles	(50)	(20)	(10)	(5)
*March 31	Gulfstream Park Oaks	Gulfstream Park	1 1/16 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 7	Ashland	Keeneland	1 1/16 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 7	Santa Anita Oaks	Santa Anita	1 1/16 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 7	Gazelle	Aqueduct	1 1/8 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
April 13	Fantasy	Oaklawn Park	1 1/16 Miles	(100)	(40)	(20)	(10)
*April 19	Beaumont	Keeneland	7 Furlongs	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)

+ New Race Included in Series.

(T) = Turf

(S) = Synthetic

* Race dates and distances to be announced by host track; date based on recent historical placement.

Note: Schedule subject to change.

Churchill Downs, the world's most legendary racetrack, has conducted Thoroughbred racing and presented America's greatest race, the Kentucky Derby, continuously since 1875. Located in Louisville, the flagship racetrack of Churchill Downs Incorporated (NASDAQ: CHDN) offers year-round simulcast wagering at the historic track. Churchill Downs will conduct the 144th running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands on May 5, 2018. The track will conduct two more live racing meets in 2017: the September Meet from Sept. 15-Oct. 1 and its Fall Meet from Oct. 29-Nov. 26. An eight-time host to the Breeders' Cup World Championships, Churchill Downs will again be the site of that event on Nov. 2-3, 2018. Information is available at www.ChurchillDowns.com.

-END-